

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00871 041046Z

21

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SCI-06 PC-10 USIA-15 IO-14 INR-10

DODE-00 AGR-20 INT-08 COME-00 SR-02 ORM-03 SWF-02

DRC-01 RSC-01 /162 W

----- 010997

R 031755Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2408

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 871

AFDROUGHT

ROME FOR FODAG

EO 11652: NA

SUBJECT: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS RELIEF CAMPS AND AT-RISK  
POPULATIONS, MAURITANIA

REF: STATE 139808, PARA FOUR

1. AID/W AND ADDRESSEES SHOULD NOTE THAT THERE ARE NO RPT  
NO DROUGHT REFUGEE CAMPS PER SE IN MAURITANIA. AT LEAST  
SIXTY PERCENT OF ALL MAURITANIANS ARE NOMADS ACCORDING BEST  
ESTIMATES. GIRM ASSERTS THAT 70 TO 75 PERCENT OF POPULATION  
(MAINLY MOORS, BUT BLACK AFRICANS ARE INCLUDED) ARE NOMADS.  
BECAUSE THIS OVERWHELMINGLY NOMADIC POPULATION IS DEPENDENT  
UPON THEIR HERDS FOR FOOD--A HIGH PROTEIN DIET OF MILK AND  
MEAT--THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED BY DROUGHT TO BREAK NORMAL  
PATTERNS OF TRANSHUMANCE AND EITHER FLEE SOUTHWARD IN SEARCH  
OF WATER FOR HERDS, OR WHEN HERDS LOST, CLUSTER IN AND AROUND  
MAURITANIAN TOWNS WHERE RELIEF FOODS AND MEDICINES AVAILABLE.  
(THERE ARE NO RELIABLE ESTIMATES OF HOW MANY THOUSAND  
MAURITANIAN NOMADS HAVE EMIGRATED TO NEIGHBORING STATES.)

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 NOUAKC 00871 041046Z

SOME NOMADS HAVE, HOWEVER, PREFERRED REMAIN FAR OUTSIDE

MAJOR TOWNS EVEN THOUGH THEIR TRADITIONAL MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD (THEIR HERDS) HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY DROUGHT. THEREFORE, NOMADIC CAMPS RANGING FROM ONE OR TWO UP TO ONE HUNDRED TENTS ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT MAURITANIA, A LAND AREA OF ONE MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS.

2. NONE RPT NONE OF THESE CAMPS ARE IN ANY WAY CREATED, ORGANIZED OR CONTROLLED BY GIRM OR OTHER RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS, THOUGH GIRM HAS ENCOURAGED NOMADS CAMP NEAR TOWNS WHERE FOOD/WATER AVAILABLE. TRADITIONAL SQUATTERS RIGHTS PREVAIL AND THE NOMADS COME AND GO AS THEY PLEASE. MANY CONTINUE TO MOVE FROM PLACE TO PLACE SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR EVEN THOUGH THEIR HERDS ARE DECIMATED OR COMPLETELY DESTROYED. THE ONLY ATTEMPT WE KNOW OF BY GIRM TO IN ANY WAY ORGANIZE DISPLACED NOMADS IS TAKING PLACE NOW IN NOUAKCHOTT. HERE, THE DISTRICT GOVERNOR IS IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING TWO NEW ARRONDISSEMENTS COMPLETE WITH SURVEYED HOUSE OR TENT LOTS, DISPENSARIES, MARKETS, OFFICES FOR POLICE AND PREFECT, AND SCHOOLS. THESE NEW ARRONDISSEMENTS ARE NOT REFUGEE CAMPS BY ANY STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION. ON THE CONTRARY, THEIR CREATION IS AN ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR PERSONS WHO HAVE APPARENTLY SETTLED MORE OR LESS PERMANENTLY IN THE CAPITAL CITY, BUT WHO ARE NOW WITHOUT BASIC COMMUNITY SERVICES, AND HAVE POSED PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT.

3. IN SUM, THERE ARE BY DEFINITION NO RPT NO REFUGEES PER SE IN MAURITANIA. THOUGH NOMADIC MAURITANIAN MOORS MAY BE CONSIDERED FOREIGNERS AND REFUGEES IN OTHER SAHELIAN STATES, THIS GROUP IS THE MAJORITY OF THE VOPKLATION HERE AND IS BENEFITTING FROM THE MAXIMUM RELIEF EFFORTS OF A GOVERNMENT DOMINATED BY MOORS. THIS GOVERNMENT, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, HAS PERCEIVED NO NEED TO CREATE REFUGEE CAMPS FOR ITS NOMADIC POPULATION.

4. IN LIGHT ALL ABOVE DO NOT PLAN RESPOND FURTHER TO DETAAAILED QUESTIONS RAISED PARA FOUR B AND C, STATE REFTEL, WHICH PERTAIN TO REFUGEE CAMPS. AVAILABLE STATISTICS ON WORST AFFECTED REGIONS (FIRST: SECOND AND THRID) SUBMITTED BY SEPTTEL. CDC NUTRITION SURVEY NOW IN PROGRESS WILL PROVIDE MOST RELIABLE INFO AVAILABLE ON GENERAL HEALTH STATUS IN MAURITANIA. OTHER QUESTIONS RAISED STATE REFTEL WILL UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 NOUAKC 00871 041046Z

BE THE SUBJECT OF SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES. SHURTLEFF

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DISASTER RELIEF, DRUGS, AFDROUGHT, REFUGEE CAMPS, FOOD ASSISTANCE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 JUL 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
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**Film Number:** D740177-1085  
**From:** NOUAKCHOTT  
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**Office:** ACTION AID  
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**Subject:** REPORTING REQUIREMENTS RELIEF CAMPS AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS, MAURITANIA  
**TAGS:** EAID, SPOP, MR  
**To:** STATE  
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